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SUBJECT: U.S.-ITALY SECURITY DIALOGUES

REF: STATE 112900

11. (U) This cable answers reftel request for information on U.S.-Italian Security Dialogues: their nature, frequency and usefulness.

12. (SBU) The principal U.S.-Italy security dialogue is the Joint Military Commission, which governs the presence of U.S. military forces on Italian bases. It was first established in the context of the agreements which govern this presence: the 1951 NATO Status of Forces Agreement and the 1954 Bilateral Infrastructure Agreement, later modified by the 1995 Shell Agreement, which specifically mandated JMC meetings. It meets approximately three times yearly in Italy, and the next scheduled meeting is November 30 - December 1 in Rome. The U.S. side is co-chaired by one of the three senior U.S. Commanders in Italy on a rotating basis (Army, Navy, Air Force) and by the U.S. Embassy Political-Military Counselor. The Italian side is chaired by the Italian Defense General Staff J3/J5 (Director of Plans and Policy), currently Major General Magro.

13. (SBU) Assessment of the utility of the JMC dialogue: High. The JMC is the indispensable forum for resolving any and all technical issues or disputes and developing future courses of joint military cooperation in the framework of U.S. basing in Italy. It is a highly substantive and results-oriented dialogue with concrete outcomes, where detailed Technical Agreements on each individual base are drafted, modified and signed. Although representatives from EUCOM regularly attend, there are no Washington-based participants and thus no Washington resources are expended.

14. (SBU) In addition, there are a number of regular dialogues within a more general security/pol-mil framework, listed below. Post regards these meetings as having high value because they deal with substantive issues and generally do not place unreasonable demands on the time of senior Washington officials.

a. U.S.-Italy Joint Staff Talks. Take place annually, rotating between Washington and Rome, with participation normally at the level of the U.S. Deputy J5 for Europe and the Italian Deputy J3/J5 (Brigadier General level). Last met October 2009 in Washington at the Major General Level. Focused on operational issues, plans and policy.

b. U.S.-Italy Navy Talks. There are no regularly scheduled staff talks, but Italian Navy Staff occasionally meet locally with U.S. Commands based in Italy. These are generally issue based-working groups with an operational

focus. The next meeting of this sort takes place in December 2009 at the 05 level between Sixth Fleet HQ/Commander Navy Europe in Naples and Italian Navy counterparts.

c. U.S.-Italy Army Staff Talks. Take place every 18 months at the Brigadier General level and focused on operational issues such as interoperability and training. In addition, the U.S. and Italian Armies meet annually in the framework of the Senior National Representative Italy-Army (SNR-A) talks which are focused on acquisition, science and technology. These talks are led by an Italian Lieutenant General and a DOD Deputy Assistant Secretary for Acquisitions.

d. U.S.-Italy Air Force Staff Talks. Take place biannually, rotating between Washington and Rome at the Major General level (HQ to HQ). The focus is on training, organization and equipment.

e. Five-Power National Armaments Directors' Meeting: The U.S., Italy, France, UK and Germany meet at the National Armaments Director (NAD) level to discuss cooperative armaments programs (e.g., JSF, MEADS, AGS, etc). The U.S. principal is currently Dr. Ashton Carter, the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisitions, Technology and Logistics. The forum convenes twice a year directly before plenary (26-nation) NATO NAD meetings. The last Five-Power assembly took place in Brussels in October 2009.

f. ISAF RC-West Talks. These are discussions between the countries that contribute troops to RC-West in

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Afghanistan (Italy, U.S., Spain, Lithuania, Slovenia, Albania, etc.). The group has met twice in Rome in meetings hosted by the Italian MFA (March 2008 and February 2009), but there is no regular schedule of meetings nor a standard level of participation. At the March 2008 meeting, OSD was represented by Madeleine Le Page and State was represented by then-SCA/A Director Tim Wilder. At the February 2009 meeting the U.S. was represented by the Charge d'Affaires and representatives of the Defense Attache Office. The forum provides a useful exchange of views on issues of shared relevance in RC-West, but it has not become institutionalized and has not yielded specific commitments from the group either in terms of troop levels or other cooperative ventures.

g. Declaration of Principles Meetings: These are bilateral working groups dealing with a range of cooperative security-related efforts in the technical, scientific and engineering fields. They generally meet once a year at the working level (next meeting is in December 2009) and once a year at a higher level (June). Coordination is managed by OSD(ATL).
THORNE